

and prevent the material constituting the contact plug 44 from being diffused into the first interlayer dielectric layer 32. The barrier metal layer may be a Ti/TiN film.

However, the barrier metal layer is not limited to being a Ti/TiN film.

**In the Claims:**

Please cancel claims 11-13 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

The following replacement claim is respectfully submitted:

14. (Amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising removing the photosensitive film pattern after the portion of the conductive line defining the gap therein is exposed.

Please add the following new claims.

--21. The method of claim 10, wherein the etching of the first and second interlayer dielectric layers comprises:

etching the second portion of the second interlayer dielectric layer using the photosensitive film pattern as an etch mask until a portion of the conductive line defining the gap is exposed, and

etching the first portion of the second interlayer dielectric layer occupying the gap in the conductive line, and the portion of the first interlayer dielectric layer underlying the

gap, using the etched second interlayer dielectric layer and the portion of the conductive line defining the gap therein as etch masks.

22. The method of claim 10, wherein the etching of the portion of the first portion of the second interlayer dielectric layer occupying the gap in the conductive line comprises an anisotropic etching process which produces inclined sidewalls in the conductive line, whereby the cross-sectional area of an upper portion of the contact hole is greater than that of a lower portion thereof.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the etching of the portion of the first portion of the second interlayer dielectric layer occupying the gap in the conductive line comprises an anisotropic etching process which produces inclined sidewalls in the conductive line, whereby the cross-sectional area of an upper portion of the contact hole is greater than that of a lower portion thereof.--

#### **Remarks**

The Office Action of August 15, 2001 and the reference cited therein have been carefully studied and reviewed, and in view of the following representations, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Applicants' claims 1-15 as being anticipated under 35 USC 102 in view of USP 6,037,211 to Jeng et al.